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English, French, Spanish or Italian extraction, will fail to almost instantly understand the following short specimen:

“La establiso di la internaciona linguo tute ne esas verko di personala inspireso, fantazio od arbitrio, sed verko di cienco e di pacienteso. Ni ne pretendas a neeroriveso e ne konsideras nia verko quale ideala. Ol esas simple verko di cienco, di koncienco e di bonvolo. Nia verko ne esas certe perfekta; sed, quo forsan plu valoras, ol esas sempre perfektigebla.”

In conclusion I must agree with Dr. Carus that the Esperantists at least have perhaps been far too hasty and over-anxious, and I must plead guilty as having been one of them. Certainly many of them have shown an unreasoning antagonism to even the most essential changes and reforms. When the Doctor suggested a system of pasigraphy some years ago, he did not attempt to force its acceptance, assert that it was “untouchable” or make any extraordinary claims for it. Nor yet, on the other hand, did he then raise any question as to its cerebral receptivity or acceptance through the optic instead of the auditory nerve! But why did he not suggest an already existing pasigraphy like the Chinese? And the anticipated answer that it is too cumbersome and unsuitable for international usage will also apply, with but slightly lesser force, to English or any other naturally evolved language.

And finally I ought not perhaps to forget a word of commendation for Mr. Strauss’s able and impartial argument, not forgetting to add, however, that M. Bollack has since given up any attempt to propagate his own system and thrown his forces with the Ilists.

ALEXANDER H. MACKINNON

SEATTLE, WASH.

#### A DEFENCE OF INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE.

In the October issue of your magazine you propose to have the problem of an artificial language discussed, and you proceed to express yourself adversely, while Mr. C. T. Strauss defends it, though, according to his own admission, rather from the point of view of a theoretical observer than as a practical adept of one of the many international language systems. Permit me to answer some of your criticisms, and to supplement the remarks of Mr. Strauss by some observations gathered from two years’ study and practical use of Esperanto, both in its primitive and in its new and simplified form (“International Language of the Delegation,” “Ido” or “Ilo”).

You consider more or less complete reforms in spelling and even in pronunciation as much easier to introduce than an artificial auxiliary language. You are willing to give the artificial language makers and adepts a chance to show what they can accomplish, but you believe that the life-time of one generation will not suffice to realize the problem. The friends of the artificial language idea are of the opposite opinion: they favor an artificial language because they think that it could be introduced within fifteen or twenty years, while fifty years would hardly be enough to make the Anglo-Saxon public of the old and new worlds accept even so comparatively slight shortcuts in their orthography as *ar*, *det*, *dum*, *fisic*.

Your criticism seems founded, in part, on the high office you attribute to such a language. Simplicity, indeed, cannot be a leading feature of a tongue that is to be adapted at a time to commercial relations, scientific communications, and literature in all its phases. This just objection cannot be too energetically repeated to the Esperanto fanatics who, with their leader Zamenhof at the head, insist upon squeezing works like "Iphigenie" of Goethe into the Procrustean bed of their 1000-root language (for the other 4000 or 5000 roots in Esperanto translate purely technical expressions).

You find that irregularities would result from an introduction of the language into the living practice, as the public would soon begin to contract inconveniently long forms. This consideration can only stimulate the makers of artificial languages to give their output a high degree of brevity and simplicity from the outset. The remodeling to which the Parisian committee subjected Primitive Esperanto in October of last year has been largely necessitated by a series of *a priori* forms, chosen arbitrarily by the inventor, and which have proven themselves a hindrance in the practice. At the same time, the principle was laid down that no artificial language can claim an absolute intangibility as to some of its parts, such as was proclaimed by the Esperantists in 1905, chiefly at the behest of commercial propagandists. A competent authority must be entrusted with the right to introduce further improvements, both additions and simplifications, and to guide the blind usage, which has during the last few years engendered in Esperanto a large number of anomalies. Your remark that irregularities in a language spring from abbreviations of speech, while it is correct to a certain extent, does certainly not apply to all cases. The forms *sprung*, *sprang*, *sprung*, for instance, which in German grammar are called strong, i. e., regular verbs forming a class of their own, are in English grammar ordi-

narly classified as irregular; and this classification can be justified when bearing in mind that there is hardly one verb of this type to a hundred verbs of the type *jump*, *jumped*, *jumped*. This latter type has now become practically the norm and is still absorbing gradually verbs of older formation. The Academy of the International Language can prevent such apparent anomalies by foreseeing how unwise it would be to use variation of a median sound in a verb as a means of distinguishing tenses; for the unnecessary restriction in the choice of roots which would follow from the adoption of this plan would soon lead in practice to the parallel of a second and less cumbersome form. A well-formed artificial language will degenerate much less through usage than a national language, and the cases where difficulties occur will have to be handled on their merits by a competent body.

You suggest that the reformers should improve one of the existing languages, instead of making a new one. Here you have by independent reflection arrived at a conclusion which the Esperantists (at least those that are honest with themselves and others) have learned through practice. *A priori* language making has now been discarded to such an extent that even the free selection made by Dr. Zamenhof of many German or Slavonic roots (for instance *vosto* "tail," should be *kaudo* which occurs as a root or as a word in English, French, Italian and Spanish; *tago* "day," should be *dio* E. I. S.; *taugi* "to fit," should be *konvenar* E. F. I. S.; *varbi* "to recruit," should be *rekrutar* German, E. F. I. Russian, S.) has been absolutely rejected. The international vocabulary must be the easiest possible for the greatest number of men, hence a root known to 180 million people is to be preferred systematically to one known by 100 million.

The next requirement is that these roots must be capable of developing the needed derivatives according to a uniform system. Here again is a principle which is found in germ in Primitive Esperanto, but is recognized to its full extent only in Ido. Several suffixes have been added; the more or less confused use of the old ones has been regulated; a number of faulty derivatives or of awkwardly lengthy forms have been replaced by new roots of international character. In your former article, of October 1907, you very justly pointed out the dangers that could ensue from a diletant handling of the word-building material contained in Esperanto. Now precise rules for derivation have been laid down in the grammars, so that competent persons are able to form correct and clear derivatives in those cases where the amplified vocabulary does

not furnish simple roots. Persons of a less logical turn of mind are referred to the dictionaries, manuals or usage for acquiring their vocabulary. No language, whether artificial or natural, can do more; but to invite writers to form such expressions themselves, according to their best ability and without fixed principles, such as Primitive Esperanto has done heretofore, is to bring sure complication and ruin on the language.

Is it possible, then, with these great guiding principles of internationality and logical construction, to form a language that is above attack in all details? Perhaps not: ordinary common sense, rather than science, will, after all, have a small share in the fixing of the alphabet and of the grammar. Here simplicity must govern, and there may be some difference of opinion as to what is absolutely required and what not. Still, the most recent language projects do not differ widely on these points; so it seems the rejection of unnecessary complications cannot be carried much further. There must be no letters that are not in the Roman alphabet; there must be no sounds that would be difficult to several important nations; there must be no difficult combinations of sounds; there must even be euphony; and the grammar must be rather on the English type with logical word order, without an accusative and without an inflected adjective, than on the German type, with cumbersome declensions and syntax. It will be found especially difficult to choose the pronouns so as to please everybody.

Still, these minor points cannot be regarded as serious obstacles to the scientific, rather than the empiric solution of the problem. Jespersen has now given up entirely the Platonic attitude that you ascribe to him about the subject, and has treated on the above outlined topics in articles written in Ido itself, which have been published during several months in our monthly *Progreso*. He has also written the preface for the Ido-national dictionaries. Bollack, whose system Mr. Strauss is inclined to prefer, has laid aside his own work and is now with characteristic enthusiasm and generosity propagating Ido. He is, indeed, almost the only one of the inventors who has shown this latitude of spirit. For instance, Molenaar protests vehemently against Ido and continues to expound the advantages of his pan-romanic "Universal," which consists exclusively of ready made words adopted as they stand, is quite irregular in its vocabulary for any one who does not know a Romance language beforehand, and is dependent in all its details upon constant borrowing from living languages. Another group of language makers is now

perfecting the "Idiom Neutral" with the aim to produce a language that excels less for European internationality, systematic rules for derivation and extreme simplicity of grammar, than for its aspect of a living Romance tongue—as if a philologically revised New-Latin were not still far too complicated and idiomatic for general use! Aside from these systems on European and on Romance bases, there is at least one project based on the pure Teutonic and even one based on the Greek vocabulary.

On the other hand, many Esperantists, with their leader Zamenhof at the head, claim that science has nothing whatever to do with the problem, which according to them is a purely dynamic one: the language that is most thoroughly advertised and consequently attracts the most attention among the general public, has the best chances for success. This is true to quite a large extent, but still not so exclusively as the ordinary run of commercial propagandists of Esperanto believe. It would rather seem that an enthusiastic propaganda is possible only where the conviction as to the intrinsic merits of the propagated language is genuine. The rapid falling off in the number of adherents of Primitive Esperanto during the last four months, especially in Germany, is ample proof of this fact. The attempts of the Esperantists to make an impression by their noisy yearly congresses promise little for the future, since the city of Dresden became one of the centers of the Ido movement, just one month after seeing the enthusiastic gathering of the orthodox Esperantists last August.

Considering the mental capacity of its adherents, Ido seems now to have a fair lead over the competing systems. It is the aim of the movement to persuade inventors of other systems, as well as men of science who are interested, to take a seat in their planned academy and thus profit by their labors in further developing the language according to the established principles. It is not unlikely therefore that the preponderance of Ido will soon become overwhelming and that the followers of Zamenhof will have to make peace with the new system as best they can. While unity among the advocates of the international language idea seems still far off, the prospects are not discouraging. Granting that many details in Ido, especially those that relate to phraseology, are still to be settled more definitely, why should it not be possible in time to have the Ido academy replaced by an international commission, appointed by the different governments? And why should not the governments then recommend and even require a knowledge of the international language for certain

purposes? The impetus thus given to this language would soon be a powerful incentive for the general public to acquire a knowledge of it. I cannot possibly see why an international idiom thus acquired should, for the person using it, differ from any natural foreign speech that he has learned, except in this that the artificial language requires as many months as the other requires years to acquire. I can, from my own experience, testify that I learned to use Esperanto in conversation with what I consider a high degree of ease and fluency within five months, more so in fact than I succeeded with the English language within the same number of years, although, as a born German, I am by no means raw in languages, in fact have a fair degree of fluency in the oral use of four of them and a reading and theoretical knowledge of a number of roots.

The international language is certainly much more artificial than even literary German, but still it seems to me to be less artificial in its application to modern topics than classical Latin would be. It is and will be, according to the express declaration of its promulgators, "never perfect, but always perfectible." It should not be expected to compete with our national languages in wealth, for then it could no longer be simple; but on the other hand it aspires to a high degree of preciseness. As Ido has over Esperanto the great advantage of legibility at first sight, and over the other systems that of a vigorous propaganda, it takes no great gift of prophecy to foretell that it will spread enormously within a few years. It will be highly interesting to observe to what extent the practical application of this language in many provinces will refute the *a priori* objections of the majority of the scientists.

O. H. MAYER.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.

#### ESPERANTO, ILO AND MALAY.

Concerning the establishment of an international language, we have so far preserved a neutral attitude, because we bear in mind that a language is comparable to living organisms, and it would be as easy to construct an ideal plant as to produce an ideal language. Languages grow just as plants and animals. A language does not consist merely of words that are printed in dictionaries, but exists in the living brain-structure of the people who speak it. I do not argue against the theoretical possibility of constructing an ideal plant or an ideal animal, or even a homunculus after the fashion